

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 IO-13 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3615

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY EINIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1169

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LY, EG, US, MORG

SUBJ: 1 SEPTEMBER MILITARY PARADE

REF: TRIPOLI 1167

1. HIGH POINT OF IMPRESSIVE LIBYAN REVOLPTION
ANNIVERSARY PARADE WAS DISPLAY OF SCUD-B SURFACE-TO-SURFACE
MISSILES. AT LEAST FOUR WHITE PAINTED SCUDS WERE
EXPOSED ON LAUNCHER-ERECTOR VEHICLES AND TWO MORE ON
TRANSPORTERS. IN ADDITION, THERE WERE THREE OR FOUR

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TRANSPORTERS EACH CARRYING TWO TARP-COVERED CYLINDERS

WHICH APPEARED TO BE OF SCUD CONFIGURATION. ALTHOUGH (OR PERHAPS BECAUSE) PARADE ANNOUNCERS' CLAIMS (THAT ONLY LIBYA AND THE USSR HAVE THESE "TRANSBORDER" MISSILES AND THAT THESE MISSILES CAN REACH ISRAEL AND EVEN AMERICA) WERE EMOTIONALLY EXAGGERATED, CROWD RESPONDING WITH ENTHUSIASTIC CLAPPING AND CHANTING OF EVENING TO THIS "SPECIAL SURPRISE." ONLY TIME DURING PARADE WHEN QATYAFI STOOD WAS AS SCUDS PASSED REVIEWING STAND.

2. OTHER EQUIPMENT IN PARADE INCLUDED SA-2, SA-3, SA-6, AND FRENCH CROTALE SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES; VARIETY OF SOVIET-MADE ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS AND TRACKED AMPHIBIOUS VEHICLES; AND ARRAY OF HEAVY ARTILLERY AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS. HOUR AND THREE-QUATER PARADE ENDED IN THUNDERING FINALE WITH ABOUT 125 T-54 AND T-55 TJ.

3. COMMENT: LIBYAN MILITARY DISCIPLINE AND SKILL THROUGHOUT PARADE SURPRISINGLY DECENT (BY ARAB STANDARDS). MARCHING UNITS GENERALLY MAINTAINED SMART CADENCE, WITH NAVAL AND AIR FORCE CADETS AND COMMANDOS ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY. TANK AND OTHER HEAVY VEHICLE DRIVERS PERFORMED NIMBLY AT FAST PACE THROUGH WINDING TRIPOLI STREETS. THERE WAS NO AIRCRAFT FLY-OVER DURING EVENING PARADE, ALTHOUGH FOUR MIRAGES IN CLOSE FORMATION MADE SEVERAL PASSES OVER CITY IN THE AFTERNOON AT ALTITUDES THAT IN SOME CASES APPEARED LOWER THAN 1000 FEET. SOVIET AND OTHER FOREIGN ADVISORS MAY HAVE BEEN IN BACKGROUND BUT

NONE WERE NOTED WITH THE PARTICIPATING LIBYAN UNITS EITHER DURING THE PARADE OR IN THE PRECEDING HOURS AS THE VARIOUS TYPES OF EQUIPMENT WERE LINED UP IN STAGING AREA ALONG THE CORNICHE. ANNOUNCERS STRESSED THAT MUCH OF THE NEW EQUIPMENT WAS BEING DISPLAYED PUBLICLY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LIBYA AND THAT EQUIPMENT IN THE PARADE COMPRISED ONLY A TOKEN OF THE TOTAL LIBYAN MILITARY INVENTORY OF MODERN WEAPONRY. THIS WAS PROBABLY CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GREATEST MILITARY PARADE IN LIBYAN HISTORY, AND QADHAFI WAS UNDOUBTEDLY TRYING TO DEMONSTRATE HIS ARSENAL AND ARMED FORCES PROWESS IN THE MOST STUNNING LIGHT POSSIBLE.
CARLE

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